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AN ALTERNATIVE MARINE CORPS.(U)

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In 1976, Martin Binkin and Jeffrey Record wrote Where Does the Marine Corps Go From Here? Their proposal was that there is no need for an amphibious capability of current magnitude. One alternative proposed was to reduce this capability by converting a Marine division to an airborne division. This proposal would also deactivate another Marine division and supporting units.

The proposal was analyzed from two points: Was it cost effective; would it leave the United States a less responsive defensive posture? Analysis of the proposal uncovered unanswered questions; important variables had not been considered. Quantitative costs had only been partially covered; qualitative costs were unaddressed. The proposal from that aspect was not cost effective. The study determined, contrary to the authors' claim, the proposal would weaken the United States defense posture in two ways: by assigning the airborne mission to the Marine Corps which has minimal airborne expertise or logistical base to adequately ensure its accomplishment; of greater impact, adoption would reduce our current amphibious force by two-thirds, making it relatively unresponsive for meeting crises.

The proposal warrents more examination than the authors afforded it. The final results were not intended to be solutions, but rather areas for further investigation.

AN ALTERNATIVE MARINE CORPS

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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An Alternative Marine Corps

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Final report 9 June 1978

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A Master of Military Art and Science thesis presented to the faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

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ABSTRACT

AN ALTERNATIVE MARINE CORPS, by Major J. K. Rider, USMC, 91 pages.

In 1976, Martin Binkin and Jeffrey Record published the book, Where Does the Marine Corps Go From Here?. Their basic premise was that there is no longer a need for the Marine Corps amphibious capability of the current magnitude. One of the alternatives they proposed was to reduce this capability by converting an existing Marine division to an airborne division. This same proposal would also deactivate another Marine division and supporting units.

The study analyzed the proposal from two points: was it cost effective and would it leave the United States in a less responsive defense posture? An analysis of the proposal uncovered too many unanswered questions, too many important variables had not been considered. Quantitative costs of the proposal had only been partially covered, qualitative costs had not been addressed. The proposal from that aspect alone was not cost effective. Further, the study determined that, contrary to the authors' claim, the proposal would weaken the United States defense posture in two ways: by assigning the airborne mission to the Marine Corps which has minimal airborne expertise or logistical base to adequately ensure its accomplishment; and of greater impact, adoption would reduce our current amphibious force by two-thirds, making it relatively unresponsive for meeting crises throughout the world.

It is a proposal that warrants far more detailed examination than the authors have afforded it. Thus, the final results were not intended to be solutions but rather areas for further study and investigation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1976, Brookings Institute published as part of their Studies in Defense Policy series, a book by Martin Binkin and Jeffrey Record entitled, Where Does the Marine Corps Go From Here?. The authors raised several issues in their book about the future of the United States Marine Corps, specifically questioning its traditional amphibious mission and roles.¹ While not advocating the elimination of the Marine Corps and its amphibious capabilities, the authors did present four alternate missions and concomitant changes to current force structure.² These alternatives arose from four constraints perceived by the authors.

The first constraint was that most potential adversaries of the United States are landlocked thus negating amphibious operations as an important part of any major campaign.³ The second constraint dealt with the presence of United States and friendly forces overseas. Unlike the situation of World War II in the Pacific and Atlantic theaters, the authors claim there will be no more need to storm ashore on a hostile beachhead if conflict erupted in the world. The geographical positions of allied forces today in Europe and Asia precludes that eventuality according to the authors.⁴ A third constraint concerned the proliferation of precision-guided munitions on the modern battlefield today. They believe that the widespread use of these weapons, even by technologically unsophisticated armies gives rise to a serious question of the probable success of amphibious operations in the future.⁵ Finally, the authors

cited the decline of naval support, both naval gunfire and amphibious shipping as a constraint to amphibious operations.⁶ One other consideration was also expressed by Binkin and Record and that was with the cost of an amphibious force-in-being. They question the expense involved in maintaining a large amphibious force in the form of the United States Marine Corps, especially if there is not a need for it at its current size.⁷

Based on these constraints Binkin and Record presented what they perceived as four basic alternatives to the current mission, structure, and size of the Marine Corps. This paper will analyze in depth one of those alternatives, that of a Marine Corps division assuming the airborne mission of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division and the elimination of one Marine Amphibious Force.⁸

The authors have suggested that both money and men could be saved by the Marine Corps' assumption of the airborne mission and total elimination of one Marine Amphibious Force consisting of one Marine division, part of a Marine airwing and support troops. They propose that the 82nd Airborne Division be replaced by six Marine Corps maneuver battalions. These battalions would be reconfigured into eight Army-sized airborne battalions and become the core of a Marine Corps airborne division. The authors suggest that the rest of the manpower for the Marine Airborne Division come from other Marine Corps organizations and former members of the 82nd Airborne Division who choose to join the new organization. Equipment would come from both the Marine Corps and the disbanded Army airborne division.⁹

End results would find the Marine Corps with one amphibious trained division vice the current three, and the Army without an airborne division. The airborne division would then belong to the Marine Corps.

They did not say if that Marine airborne division would retain any amphibious capability. The authors give the impression that there would be considerable savings in such a change, both in money and manpower.¹⁰

The Marine Corps has in fact had experiences with their own airborne forces. Knowledge gained during World War II and since has convinced Marine Corps planners that an airborne role for the Marine Corps should be confined primarily to what it is at present, a method of reconnaissance team insertion, Air Naval Gunfire Liaison support, and aerial delivery.¹¹ There are no current plans, nor have there been since World War II to deploy Marines into combat via a large scale airborne landing (excluding airlanding).

Nonetheless, the suggestion has been advanced by Binkin and Record that the Marine Corps assume the airborne mission. This proposal has been made in spite of the fact that currently the Marine Corps is specifically limited in airborne type operations to the transportation of Marine Corps forces by air and prohibited from training and equipping parachute units unless authorized by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹² The proposal had, as previously pointed out, an adjunct recommendation for two full Marine Corps division reduced amphibious force capability for the United States military.¹³

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Material on missions, force structure and costs for both the Marine Corps and Army airborne units is published by the respective services. There has been a great deal of information published on the roles or projected roles of both organizations as is evidenced in the bibliography. However, information written on the conversion of a Marine

amphibious force to a Marine airborne force is virtually non-existent outside of the proposal put forth by Binkin and Record. Discussion of similar types of a conversion have appeared in a few articles discussing the missions and roles of the Marine Corps. However, that discussion is generally more in the line of an added capability rather than replacing the Army airborne capability and reducing the Marine Corps amphibious capability. The main theme of articles and other publications written on the Marine Corps and airborne forces is that they either are or are not viable forces with either distinct or indistinct missions and are either in keeping or not in keeping with our current military posture. Nowhere is the subject discussed in depth covering mission changes, force restructuring, and cost involved in making such a conversion. This study analyzed these heretofore neglected aspects of the proposal.

THE PROBLEM

This paper researched the problems of converting a Marine Corps force into an airborne force and the elimination of a Marine Amphibious Force. Issues addressed were: changes in missions, force restructuring, costs that could reasonably be expected to accrue and probable effects on our defense posture. If a Marine division were to be converted to an airborne division, which of these problems must be considered in making such a conversion, any or all of them?

VALUE OF THE STUDY

This study provides information to:

1. Compare the mission and structure of a Marine Corps division with those of an Army airborne division.

2. Examine the probable costs, both quantitative and qualitative, of a proposed conversion from a Marine Corps amphibious division to a Marine Corps airborne division and the elimination of a Marine Amphibious Force.

3. Create a base for further studies to determine if the conversion is feasible.

LIMITATIONS, ASSUMPTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

There was a great deal of information from military and non-military sources on the subject of both Marine Corps and airborne forces. As previously mentioned, little has been specifically published on the conversion of a Marine Corps force to an airborne force. Some writings appeared on that subject shortly after World War II, however until the Binkin and Record book in 1976, the proposal never went beyond the musings of contributors to professional journals.¹⁵ Because of the paucity of studies in this area, there were certain limitations applied to the scope of the research.

First, except for the Binkin and Record book, the literature examined in preparing this study did not directly address the actual subject of conversion.

Second, the literature analyzed covered a span of time from the turn of the century to the present. This was necessary to gain a historical background to the subject of current and projected missions and force structures.

Third, limited comparisons in missions were made to Warsaw Pact amphibious and airborne forces, and to the Soviet Union in particular. This was done to illustrate and compare the doctrinal philosophy of other nations in the area of amphibious and airborne operations.

Fourth, the possible effect of such a conversion on the Marine Corps was dealt with by examining just the effect on its amphibious role.

Fifth, the costs incurred in exchanging bases between the services and the politics involved were beyond the scope of the paper and only mentioned.

Sixth, no judgment was made as to whether a Marine Corps force, properly trained and equipped could accomplish the airborne mission more or less effectively than the current Army airborne force.

Three assumptions were made in the research to keep the study within definite guidelines.

First, Binkin and Record pointed out that there will continue to be a need for an amphibious capability in the United States for some time to come.¹⁶ This is a valid assumption and can be argued for based upon our current defense policies as a maritime nation.

Second, the authors' assumption that there will be a need for a quick reaction force in the form of an airborne division is valid.¹⁷

Third, there will continue to be a scarce dollar situation based on defense priorities in the future. This will cause all segments of the United States military to strive for cost effectiveness as well as attempting to meet any threat to our national security.

In addition to the assumptions, the following definitions from the Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 1 were provided for the purpose of clarity:

Airborne Operation--an operation involving the air movement into an objective area of combat forces and their logistical support for execution of a tactical or strategic mission. The means employed

may be any combination of airborne units, air transportable units and types of transport aircraft, depending on the mission and the overall situation.¹⁸ For the purpose of this study, the airborne operation will refer to parachute operations and exclude airlanding or heliborne operations.

Amphibious Operations--an attack launched from the sea by naval and landing forces, embarked in ships or craft involving a landing on a hostile shore. As an entity, the amphibious operation includes the following phases:

- a. planning
- b. embarkation
- c. rehearsal
- d. movement
- e. assault¹⁹

ORGANIZATION

This paper is organized as follows: Chapter I provides introduction to the subject with Chapter II reviewing the literature on the historical aspects leading to the current missions and force structure of a Marine Corps division and an Army airborne division. The chapter briefly examines the evolutionary process leading to those two types of divisions today.

Chapter III presents a view of the current missions and force structure of the Marine Corps division and Army airborne division in relation to their roles in United States national security. Included in Chapter III is an examination of current Warsaw Pact amphibious and airborne force missions and capabilities as a comparison.

Chapter IV reports on probable costs, both quantitative and qualitative involved in converting a Marine Corps division into an airborne division.

Chapter V examines the missions, functions, responsibilities, force structures and laws that must be changed or modified in order to accomplish the proposed conversion.

Chapter VI presents final areas for further study and conclusions.

END NOTES

¹Martin Binkin and Jeffrey Record, Where Does the Marine Corps Go From Here?, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1976), p. 3.

²Ibid., p. 66.

³Ibid., p. 31.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 33.

⁶Ibid., p. 34.

⁷Ibid., p. 29.

⁸Ibid., p. 78.

⁹Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 81.

¹¹U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Marine Corps, Fleet Marine Force Organization 1977, (Quantico, Virginia: Education Center, Marine Corps Development and Education Command, 1977), pp. 49, 59.

¹²U.S. Department of Defense, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, Unified Action Armed Forces, Publication 2, (Washington, D.C.: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1974), p. 27.

¹³Binkin and Record, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵John H. Johnstone, United States Marine Corps Parachute Units, Marine Corps Historical Reference Series Number 32 (Washington, D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1961), p. 8.

¹⁶Binkin and Record, op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁸U.S. Department of Defense, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Publication 1, (Washington, D.C.: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1974), p. 10.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 26.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE TWO TYPES OF DIVISIONS

BACKGROUND

Prior to rendering an evaluation of whether a Marine Corps force with its amphibious capabilities could or should be converted to an airborne force, some basic history will be presented as a general background on the two types of divisions, Marine amphibious and Army airborne. This historical view of these divisions' development and progression will establish a basis from which to understand the evolution of thought that has put both types of divisions into the United States arsenal.

MARINE CORPS EXPERIENCES IN AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE

The United States Marine Corps is over 200 years old and is well known to the American public as an organization of soldiers-of-the-sea with a history closely tied to the nation's maritime affairs around the globe. The amphibious mission currently assigned to the Marine Corps, however, is one of relatively modern origin. In fact, the first time the Marine Corps actually was assigned what could be considered an amphibious-assault role was in 1921 when the Joint Board of the Army and Navy assigned to the Marine Corps the task of ". . . initial seizure of advanced bases as are essential to the prosecution of the naval campaign."¹

Although Marines had long been used as landing parties from United States Naval vessels from the Corps inception to the eve of World War II, an amphibious force as we know today was a long time in development.² It was not until the Navy was well on its way to converting from sail to coal that the first embryo of amphibious-thought began to take form.

The Navy in the 1880's began to perceive potential problems in supplying ships with coal far from United States territory. If advanced coaling stations were to be established overseas, they would in all likelihood have to be guarded. Additionally, the United States felt a need to have an ability to enforce the Monroe Doctrine.³ The United States Army was scattered throughout the country during that period and was unable to quickly raise a force that could be used to assist the Navy in that mission. Therefore, the Navy would have to raise their own force to serve with the fleet.⁴

The issue of who would protect these coaling stations or advanced bases was unresolved until the Spanish-American War of 1898. The Navy at that time was relatively unprepared to put together a landing force of any size, however the Marine Corps was ready to carry out that mission.

The Marine Corps had an organized battalion that accompanied the Navy to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. They were employed with a mission to establish a forward base at Guantanamo Bay that was to later become a coaling and repair facility.⁶ The Marines landed in Cuba, established, and were defending a beachhead ten days before the United States Army arrived off the island.⁷ The success of that Marine battalion helped establish the Marine Corps as a major force in the Navy's planned advanced base concept.⁸ In 1901, a class for advanced base operations was

established at Newport, Rhode Island.⁹ The following year, a Marine battalion engaged in advance base maneuvers on Culebra Island in the Caribbean in conjunction with major fleet exercises in the area.¹⁰

By 1910, a permanent Advanced Base Force was established consisting of a coastal artillery regiment for a fixed defense and a mixed infantry and field artillery regiment for a mobile defense. The Advanced Base Force's total strength was 1750 officers and men. In 1914, the unit received a small aviation component.¹¹ The main function of the Advanced Base Force was defense and little or no doctrine existed that was directed toward the task of assaulting a heavily defended beach.¹² That concept was still in the future.

World War I found the Marines along with the Army, deployed in Europe, not in the Advanced Base Force role, but rather as part of the land army sent from the United States. Even with its involvement in World War I, the Marine Corps was still able to maintain its Advanced Base Force.¹³

After World War I, several events transpired that began to face the Marine Corps more squarely toward its future conflict with Japan. The first event resulted from the fact that the Advanced Base Force had been held intact during and after World War I, therefore it was deployed several times in the next few years, particularly throughout Latin America. Those deployments helped give combat experience to many Marines who would be the officers and NCO's in the amphibious operations conducted by the Marine Corps during World War II.

A second event was that the Advance Base Force was redesignated as the Expeditionary Force in 1921 and stood ready to occupy and defend advanced bases and to restore order as directed. Although this may have

appeared to be but a cosmetic name change, it assigned more of an offensive mission to the Marine Corps. That same year, a second expeditionary force was established on the west coast of the United States with the same mission as the initial force thus expanding the Marine Corps' and nation's capability in the area of advanced base operations.¹⁴

A third event affecting the Marine Corps' future role was the Japanese being given, after World War I, most of the former German colonies in the Far East and Pacific as a reward for their participation in the war on the side of the allies. The Japanese were now half-way across the Pacific and to a great degree their expansion isolated United States positions in the Philippines and on Guam.¹⁵

In spite of these events, the 1920's were relatively unproductive in developing an amphibious doctrine to be used in eventually counteracting the growing Japanese threat in the Pacific. Lack of money and interest on the part of the Navy for the untested amphibious concept were primarily responsible.¹⁶ Minor amphibious exercises were held in the early 1920's, but they ended in 1925 and did not resume until the next decade.¹⁷ This lack of training did not deter continued Marine Corps study of the problems associated with amphibious warfare. By 1923 extensive analysis of the British landings at Gallipoli was being conducted. Information from the disastrous Dardanelles effort provided a great source of knowledge to Marine Corps planners on the techniques and pitfalls of amphibious doctrine warfare.¹⁸

The first solid indication of serious thought toward future amphibious operations finally came in the form of a directive published by the Joint Board of Army and Navy in 1927. It stated that the Marine Corps would provide and maintain forces

. . . for land operations in support of the fleet for the initial seizure and defense of advanced bases and for such limited auxillary land operations as are essential to the prosecution of the naval campaign.¹⁹

For the first time in its history the Marine Corps had been officially given the amphibious mission of seizure of advanced bases for the Navy. Unfortunately that document neither created an amphibious doctrine nor did it specifically train a force to carry out the mission. The Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1933 formed an ad hoc staff at the Quantico, Virginia Marine base and directed them to plan amphibious organization and doctrine for a force-size landing operation with the fleet.²⁰

In the same year the Navy had approved the concept of the Fleet Marine Force (FMF), an amphibious force-in-being which would be under operational control of the Fleet Commander while embarked or engaged in exercises.²¹

In January 1934 the results of the Quantico study group were published in the form of the Tentative Landing Operation Manual. It was approved by the Chief of Naval Operations for temporary use the same year.²² By mid-1934, the Marine Corps had a definite amphibious mission assigned by the Joint Board of the Army and Navy, doctrine for guidance in the form of the Tentative Landing Operations Manual, and a Fleet Marine Force to carry it out. The Tentative Landing Operations Manual became the foundation for amphibious operations throughout the United States military with formal acceptance by not only the Navy, but also by the Army.²³

The ideas and concepts set forth in the Tentative Landing Operations Manual were tested and modified before and during World War II by the Army and Marine Corps.²⁴ One of the new concepts in this manual

was the use of aviation. In 1939, Marine Corps aviation received their amphibious mission from the General Board of the Navy.

Marine Aviation is to be equipped, organized and trained primarily for the support of the Fleet Marine Force in landing operations and in support of troop activities in the field; and secondarily as replacements for carrier based aircraft.²⁵

When Pearl Harbor was attacked on 7 December 1941, the Marine Corps, ground and air, entered World War II as an amphibious force. In addition to their own tasks in this area, the Marine Corps trained several Army divisions that landed in North Africa and Europe.²⁶ As Isley and Crowl in their definitive work on the Marine Corps in World War II, U.S. Marines and Amphibious Warfare, state,

. . . that the United States Army was able so quickly to train troops for crossing beaches held by hostile nations is attributable to its own flexibility and leadership and equally important, to the availability for its guidance of a sound body of amphibious doctrine previously drawn up by the United States Navy and Marine Corps.²⁷

World War II is a well-documented historical event. The part played by the Army and Marine Corps has been presented in countless publications. Even though the Marine Corps supplied but six divisions for World War II as compared to nearly 100 divisions by the Army, the Marine Corps and Commander of the 1st Marine Division on Guadalacanal, General Vandegrift stated, "The Corps contributed to the defeat of the Axis; even more they contributed to the doctrine that allowed us to defeat the enemy."²⁸

However, despite its vital role in all theaters of World War II, amphibious operations and in particular the Marine Corps came under exacting scrutiny at the end of the hostilities. After the war and demobilization, came the reorganization of the War and Navy Departments. In the National Security Act of 1947, a Department of Defense was created

with the Departments of Army, Navy and Air Force subordinate. Missions of those services were spelled out, but the status of the Marine Corps was unclear.²⁹ This uncertainty about the Marine Corps, their status and to some degree their mission was finally resolved in 1951.

That year, the National Security Act of 1947 was amended and Public Law 416 was signed which assured the Marine Corps its status, organization, and role in amphibious operations. The law provided that the Marine Corps would have three active divisions, three active air wings and that where Marine Corps matters were concerned, the Commandant of the Marine Corps would have co-equal status on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.³⁰

In September 1950, the Marine Corps made amphibious history again when, despite critics' prediction of no more amphibious landings, a successful assault was conducted at Inchon in Korea.³¹ Even so, the future role of amphibious warfare continued to come under fire using criticism based on history rather than the present or future capabilities.³² However, the need for an amphibious capacity in a world that is more water than land could be well-argued based solely on current political and geographical considerations.

From Korea to date, there have been several amphibious operations to include Lebanon in 1958, Cuba in 1962, Dominican Republic in 1965, and Vietnam from 1965 to 1974. In Vietnam alone, there were seventy-two Special Landing Force amphibious operations conducted by the Marines. They were used as a highly mobile reserve, especially in the battles along the DMZ in 1967 and 1968.³³

In April 1972, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert Cushman said that the Marine Corps was redirecting its efforts

back toward amphibious warfare and partnership with the Navy. He meant that the Marine Corps would be redirecting their attention seaward, re-employing their partnership with the Navy and a shared concern in the routine aspects of United States national strategy.³⁴ And in fact, this is what the Marine Corps has been and is doing.

That is not to say that the Marine Corps has disregarded other aspects of land warfare. Much has been learned from other conflicts around the world such as that in the 1973 Middle East war where anti-armor, anti-air warfare, and electronic warfare played such an important role.³⁵ Marine Corps tactics, organization and weapons systems increasingly are affected and when necessary, modified by these observations.

MARINE CORPS EXPERIENCES IN AIRBORNE WARFARE

Because this study examines both the amphibious and airborne missions and organizations in the United States, it is germane to briefly discuss the Marine Corps experiences with airborne operations. The development of an airborne mission for the Marine Corps roughly paralleled that of the United States Army for the first years and then permanently changed course during World War II and is quite dissimilar today.

In May 1940, a study by the Division of Plans and Policies, Headquarters Marine Corps, recommended:

- creation of an organization of Paramarines,
- probable objectives for the Paramarines,
- that such a force be developed in spite of the cost and time involved.³⁶

The initial unit was to be battalion-sized of about 580 officers and men supported by a 75mm pack howitzer battery and some additional anti-armor and anti-aircraft weapons. During the same period the Commandant of the Marine Corps directed that Naval attaches, especially in Germany, France, and Russia, gather information on those country's airborne capabilities.³⁷

The Division of Plans and Policies assembled tentative plans for a tactical parachute unit to be light airborne shock-troops. Their missions were to be: reconnaissance and raids; to act as a spearhead, similar to the amphibious advanced force that proceeds the main operation; to hold critical terrain; and finally to act as a force which would be placed in large numbers into a position of tactical advantage where it could operate independently for a considerable length of time.³⁸

On 22 October 1940, the Commandant of the Marine Corps directed that there was to be a parachute battalion with each Fleet Marine Force unit. The same month, the initial training began for the Paramarine program when two officers and thirty-eight enlisted men formed the first Marine class at the Parachute School at Lakehurst, New Jersey.³⁹

Throughout 1941 and 1942 the Paramarines were expanded until they reached regimental size. The parachute training proved of little operational value to the Marine Corps. There were no combat drops during the Pacific campaigns, although some thought was given to it. The reasons that the Paramarines were not used in airborne combat missions stemmed from the Marine Corps' peculiar situation in the Pacific. There was a lack of air-transport lift capability and distances between bases and the objectives were prohibitive for the available air transportation. Finally, the objectives assigned to the Marine Corps were often small in

area and densely defended, thus unsuitable for mass parachute landings.⁴⁰

Another shortcoming was that the Paramarines were lightly armed, with the heaviest weapon in the Parachute battalion, a 60mm mortar.⁴¹ Since their standard mission in the Pacific campaigns became that of the regular Marine combat units, they frequently had to be augmented with heavier weapons, equipment and men to fulfill their assigned tasks. Late in December 1943, the Chief of Naval Operations put an end to the Marine Corps parachuting program.⁴² Clearly the Marine Corps experience with airborne operations had not been successful. It was a weapons system never employed in its intended role.

There was some consideration of parachute units in the Marine Corps after World War II.⁴³ But these considerations were little more than writings of two officers and were not seriously considered.⁴⁴

There are only three parachute trained organizations in the Marine Corps today. One is the Aerial Delivery Platoon of the Force Service Support Group whose mission is one of combat service support in the role of aerial delivered resupply.

The second organization is the Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company whose mission is to provide non-Marine Corps units with the liaison personnel necessary to control and coordinate Navy and Marine Corps naval gunfire and close air support.

The third organization is the Force Reconnaissance Company. This unit was created in 1957 with multi-purpose missions of parachute reconnaissance and parachute path-finding operations in support of amphibious operations.⁴⁵ This unit is in existence today with a similar mission. Even though the Marine Corps experiences in the employment of large

airborne units had been relatively unsuccessful, the U.S. Army during the same period developed an effective airborne organization.

ARMY EXPERIENCES IN AIRBORNE WARFARE

World War II was a catalyst not only for the practical application of amphibious operations, but also served a similar function for airborne operations. But if World War II was the catalyst, World War I could be considered the time of inception.

It was during World War I, that Brigadier General William Mitchell devised a plan to capture the city of Metz in Germany, using a U.S. Army infantry division trained as parachutists. Although it was a novel idea, it never progressed beyond the planning stage since the war ended before it could be executed or even approved. During the same time frame, the use of airborne troops was endorsed by Winston Churchill.⁴⁶

After the war an initial attempt at an airborne demonstration by the Army came in 1928 at Kelly Field in Texas. A machine gun team complete with gun and necessary equipment was parachuted successfully with all of the team accomplishing the drop safely and gun in action within minutes. After that apparent achievement, little was done in the United States by the military with airborne for over ten years.⁴⁷

This lack of activity with airborne development was not the case throughout the world. Other armies had begun experiments in the field of airborne at about the same time. The Germans and the Italians both had started airborne training of paratroopers in the early 1930's.⁴⁸ The Soviets started dropping military parachutists with equipment in 1930. By 1935, they had an Airlanding Corps of which one airborne division had been transported across the Soviet Union to Vladivostok. In 1936, during

maneuvers near Kiev, they dropped two battalions, some light artillery, and machine guns.⁴⁹ Although the Soviets did not make use of paratroopers in airborne roles to the extent other nations did in World War II, they had thousands of them trained by the eve of the war. What airborne operations the Soviets did conduct in World War II were not greatly successful, but did not deter them from maintaining a current airborne force of eight divisions.

Although it is not documented as the first serious study of airborne warfare in the United States, in 1938 the Command and General Staff School of the Army was beginning to deal with theoretical aspects of airborne operations. Some of the students involved in those initial studies would in a few years be helping to establish doctrine in that new form of warfare.⁵¹ However, it was the German's use of airborne forces that spurred the rapid development of U.S. airborne doctrine, concepts and techniques prior to our entry into World War II.

The Germans used airborne warfare early in World War II with fair to excellent results. They used airborne and air-landed troops in Norway and Denmark, April 1940; in Holland and Belgium, May 1940; and a year later in Crete. It was the capture of Crete that made a lasting positive impression and gave impetus to the Allies in developing their own airborne forces.⁵² It is ironic that the impression made by Crete on the United States and Great Britain was almost the exact opposite of the impression made upon Hitler. The operation was so costly to the Germans that Hitler declared after Crete that the "days of the paratrooper are over."⁵³ And even though there were plans for the use of German paratroopers later in the war and some actual battalion-sized drops, never again did the Germans use mass jumps as a method of attacking an objective.⁵⁴

As early as 1940, the War Department had begun development of an airborne troop force. In September of that year, the 501st Parachute Battalion had been formed and by June of 1941, the successes at Crete by the Germans had further accelerated increased activity in the United States airborne effort.⁵⁵ Crete had thus given an urgency for the expansion of the U.S. airborne program, but at the same time it was recognized that German airborne operations at Crete were to be examined for lessons learned, and not to become a model for U.S. Army doctrine.⁵⁶ By January 1942, the War Department had directed the formation of four parachute regiments.⁵⁷

Early thought on the employment of airborne units envisioned paratroopers operating as small combat elements against key communication and supply centers in the enemy's rear. It was also believed for a short period of time that a standard infantry division could carry out an airborne operation. As the concept of airborne training, organization and equipment began to be fully appreciated, this idea was abandoned before the first airborne units ever jumped into combat. However, the idea of small air-dropped units parachuted into and operating in the enemy's rear areas was greatly expanded upon in the Army's manual on Tactics and Techniques for Airborne Troops, FM 31-30.⁵⁸

FM 31-30 was published in May 1942 and its concept stated: "Parachute troops would be a spearhead of vertical envelopment and guard-element of air-landing troops or other forces."⁵⁹ The concept saw airborne warfare and seizure of suitable landing sites by parachute troops and then reinforced by glider-borne or airplane-landed forces. It considered suitable objectives for airborne operations to be river and canal crossings, establishment of bridgeheads and attack of defensive positions

by landing on the flank or rear of the enemy. Other suitable objectives included, destruction of enemy supply and communication center, consolidation and holding of ground taken by armored forces until other ground units arrived and finally assistance to other ground offenses by vertical envelopment.⁶⁰

By March 1942, an Airborne Command had been authorized by the War Department. In August, that command had established a board to recommend standard techniques for airborne operations.⁶¹ The Airborne Command was primarily a training organization which was responsible for the training of units under its jurisdiction. Initially it had four para-infantry regiments under its command as well as one glider-trained regiment and the Parachute School at Fort Benning, Georgia.⁶² This initial force was rapidly expanded and proposals for more airborne units were advanced.

The planned date for activation of two airborne divisions was 15 August 1942. They were each to consist of one parachute regiment, two glider regiments and support.⁶³ Throughout the war this force structure changed several times as techniques and tactics of the airborne organizations were refined.

The War Department planned to eventually raise seven divisions of airborne. This plan was modified to five divisions and several independent airborne regiments by the end of the war.⁶⁴ In addition to an increase in units, doctrine was being formulated and published that would give direction to the airborne forces throughout the course of the war.

The Army published Training Circular 113 on 9 October 1943, designating the airborne mission of troops and troop carriers. It no

longer made the assumption that airfields would be seized and reinforced by air landing. It also envisaged the airborne division as operating independently up to three days without reinforcement.⁶⁵ This document remained in effect throughout the war and was incorporated into the FM 71-30 Employment of Airborne Forces in 1947. An important statement in TC-113 that has implications even in today's planning for warfare said,

The use of airborne forces as a constant threat by their mere presence in the theater of operations thereby causing the enemy to disperse his forces over a wide area in order to protect his vital installations.⁶⁶

The forces and the doctrine were prepared in a short span of time for the conduct of the first U.S. airborne operations of World War II.

Initial airborne landings were in North Africa and although tactically inconclusive, they were useful for lessons learned in application to further operations in the war.⁶⁷ It was a beginning. Throughout the rest of the war, United States and Allied paratroopers were used in a number of battles both in their airborne role and as straight infantry. Probably the most highly publicized airborne operations were those conducted in conjunction with the amphibious landing at Normandy. Those airborne operations were used primarily as a means to diminish risks for the main allied forces landing across the beach.⁶⁸

In August 1944, the first Allied Airborne Army was formed. It consisted of United States and British airborne divisions as well as some independent airborne units and the troop carrier aircraft.⁶⁹

World War II airborne operations took place not only in Europe and North Africa, but also in the Pacific. But after the war the five United States airborne divisions plus, were reduced in number until the United States currently has but one airborne division, the 82nd Airborne,

an airborne battalion in Italy, an airborne company in Panama and an airborne company in Alaska. Airborne operations in combat were accomplished by United States airborne units in Korea, by the 187th Regimental Combat Team and in Vietnam by the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

The airborne operation remains a way for a more sophisticated country to impose its will on a lesser developed nation.⁷⁰ The airborne units, either alone or with other type units, comprise a principal part of any contingency force for operations in which the United States may be involved.

Both airborne and amphibious forces have been used in concert for operations in Lebanon in 1958 and the Dominican Republic in 1956. Both forces were alerted in part or whole for possible deployment in the Middle East War of October 1973 between Israel and the Arab nations.

In conclusion, the separate and distinct roles of the two forces must be clarified. The United States Marine Corps has been the primary source of amphibious warfare doctrine and tactics for the country's armed forces since prior to World War II. Although the Army has employed amphibious landings in conjunction with the commencement of its major land campaigns of World War II and has a current collateral mission to maintain an amphibious capability, it has been the Marine Corps who has been charged with maintaining the expertise in the area of amphibious operations. The same line of logic can be seen in the use of airborne operations. The Marine Corps experimented with airborne forces on a relatively large scale over thirty years ago, has some residual capability in this area and has been tasked by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to participate if specifically directed. But it is predominantly the Army, who has developed its own tactics, organization and training in the complex area of airborne operations.

The resultant phenomena is one of institutional memory, amphibious in orientation for the Marine Corps and airborne in orientation for the Army. Each service has developed separately in these areas of specialized combat operations. Each service can call upon past experiences, information and a body of trained officers and men, general through private, who are knowledgeable in their service's particular operational discipline whether it be amphibious or airborne.

This factor is of vital importance, for lack of institutional memory of either of the two types of specialized operations provides a relatively weak force of dubious value for employment in combat. Institutional memory is a factor that merits serious consideration and will be discussed in further detail in the final chapters.

To build a relevant framework within which to examine institutional memory, the next chapter will present the current missions and force structures of each of the two types of divisions. In addition, the two divisions will be contrasted with one another to point up similarities and differences. There will also be an examination of current Warsaw Pact amphibious and airborne forces and their missions as a matter of comparison.

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CHAPTER III

CURRENT MISSIONS AND FORCE STRUCTURES

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided the background of the development for both amphibious and airborne forces in the United States. That development evolved into the two types of divisions currently in the United States arsenal. This chapter will compare and contrast the functions, missions and force structures of the two divisions, highlighting both similarities and differences. To then give broader perspective to those United States amphibious and airborne capabilities, a macro-view comparison is also made with similar Warsaw Pact capabilities and conclusions.

AMPHIBIOUS AND AIRBORNE FUNCTIONS

AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During World War II both military and other government planners determined that a reorganization of the United States' ability to wage war was essential. The results of the reorganization appeared as law two years after the conclusion of the war as the National Security Act of 1947. Its purpose was to be:

An Act to promote the national security by providing for a Secretary of Defense; for a National Military Establishment; for a Department of the Army, a Department of the Navy, and a Department of the Air Force; and for the consideration of the activities of the National Military Establishment with

other departments and agencies of the Government concerned with the national security.¹

This basic act, as amended, together with Titles 10 and 50 of the United States Code, provides the legal basis for the functions assigned to each of the three departments in the Department of Defense: Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Specific functions assigned to the armed forces appear only for the Marine Corps in that act. However, functions and responsibilities for all of the armed forces appear in two Department of Defense documents that take their authority from the amended National Security Act of 1947 and the U.S. Code. The first of those two documents is Department of Defense Directive 5100.1, "Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components," ("Functions Papers"). The second document is the Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 2, "United Action Armed Forces," ("UNAAF").

As previously indicated, the National Security Act is the controlling military legislation in the United States. Briefly, the size and functions of the Marine Corps, as well as the status of the Commandant of the Marine Corps on the Joint Chiefs of Staff are in this act.²

Section 206 of the National Security Act as amended, details the responsibilities of the Department of the Navy.³ It reads in part:

The Marine Corps, within the Department of the Navy shall be so organized as to include not less than three combat divisions and three air wings. . . . The Marine Corps shall be organized, trained and equipped to provide Fleet Marine Forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components, for service with the fleet in seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign. In addition, the Marine Corps . . . shall perform such other duties as the President may direct. However, these additional duties may not detract from or interfere with the operations for which the Marine Corps is primarily organized. The Marine Corps shall develop in coordination with the Army and Air Force, those phases of amphibious operations that pertain to the tactics, techniques and equipment used by landing forces. The Marine Corps is

responsible, in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans, for the expansion of peacetime components of the Marine Corps to meet the needs of the war. . . .⁴

As the amended National Security Act of 1947 defines basic functions and size for only the Marine Corps and none of the other armed services, it is necessary to use the "UNAAF" as the primary document for comparing and contrasting the two organizations, their assigned functions and responsibilities. Actual specific missions do not appear in "UNAAF," but are found in those regulations and manuals produced by each service. The functions and responsibilities delineated in "UNAAF" are the basis for each of the services missions.

The functions and responsibilities of the Marine Corps and its size are reiterated in "UNAAF."⁵ It also adds that in carrying out its functions, the Marine Corps is not contemplated as a second land army. The particular section dealing with the mission of the Marine Corps further goes on to define its function to ". . . develop in coordination with the other services the doctrines, tactics and equipment . . . for amphibious operations.: This is considered a primary interest of the Marine Corps.⁶

In the same document, the Army airborne responsibilities are defined. Paragraph 20207 states:

. . . With respect to airborne operations, the Army has the specific responsibility for:

- a. Organizing, equipping and providing Army forces for airborne operations.
- b. Providing for the training of such forces in accordance with doctrines established by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- c. Developing in coordination with other services, the doctrines, procedures, and equipment employed by Army and Marine Corps forces in airborne operations. (The

Army shall have primary interest in the development of those airborne doctrines, procedure and equipment which are of common interest to the Army and Marine Corps.)

- d. Designating an appropriate command or agency responsible to the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, for the following in connection with joint airborne operations:

- (1) Development of doctrine and procedures employed by Army and Marine Corps forces . . .

- e. Participating with the other services in joint airborne training and exercises as mutually agreed by the services concerned.

Thus the Army is the Joint Chiefs of Staff primary agent for airborne operations involving parachute delivered units.

To draw a conclusion at this point and state that amphibious operations will be exclusively Marine Corps operations or that airborne operations will be exclusively Army operations would be erroneous. Both services have been delegated certain other collateral functions and responsibilities, the Marine Corps in airborne operations and the Army in amphibious operations. Specifically, two sub-paragraphs under Paragraph 20302 state that other functions of the Marine Corps are: " . . . to train and equip, as required, Marine forces for airborne operations, in coordination with the other services, and in accordance with doctrines established by the Joint Chiefs of Staff"; and " . . . to develop, in coordination with the other services, doctrines, procedures, and equipment of interest to the Marine Corps for airborne operations and not provided for . . . above."⁸ These two subparagraphs taken at face value appear to indicate that the Marine Corps should have the capability and capacity to train forces for parachute operations.

However, Marine Corps responsibilities for airborne operations are covered in Paragraph 20310, Responsibilities of the Marine Corps which states:

Train and equip, as required, Marine Corps forces for airborne operations, in coordination with the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force in accordance with policies and doctrines established by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (This will be construed to mean that the Marine Corps will not, unless authorized by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, train and equip parachute units, but will, in general, limit the training and equipment for airborne operations to the transportation of Marine Corps forces by air).⁹

Thus the Marine Corps is excluded from airborne operations other than forces being transported by air, unless specifically authorized by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

As the Marine Corps has some tasking for airborne operations, albeit limited, the Army also has certain obligations for amphibious operations. "UNAAF" assigns the Army primary responsibility ". . . for the preparation of land forces necessary for the effective prosecution of the war . . ."¹⁰ In addition it also assigns under primary functions, a responsibility:

. . . to develop in coordination of the other services, the doctrines, procedures and equipment employed by the Army and Marine Corps forces, in airborne operations. The Army shall have primary interest in the development of those airborne doctrines, procedures, and equipment which are of common interest to the Army and the Marine Corps.¹¹

Therefore, each service has certain overlapping responsibilities in the area of each others primary functions. However, each service has specific guidance as to where their main emphasis is to lie; amphibious for the Marine Corps and airborne for the Army.¹² In order to carry out their assigned functions and responsibilities, the derived missions of each unit must be compared and contrasted.

MISSIONS AND FORCE STRUCTURE OF EACH DIVISION

In comparing the Marine division with the Army airborne division it is relevant to look at similarities in their specific missions. Both

types of units have a relatively rapid response time depending upon position of forces and amount of lead time for deployment. They both are used in contingency operations because of their inherent flexibility. However, there are more differences than similarities. Situations in which one unit may be employed are often not suitable for the other. This is illustrated in the difference of employment of the two types of operations in the invasion of Europe in June 1944. The two units can and have worked in operations together in the past, such as in the Dominican Republic in 1965. But whereas the Marine division has a primary mission of amphibious operations and is trained, equipped and organized with that as an objective; the airborne division is trained, equipped and organized for their mission of airborne operations. Methods for transporting each force into combat is normally different, by sea for the Marines and by air for the airborne.

In summary, each armed force has been given a primary mission with explicit directions to train, equip and organize in order to best fulfill that mission. To further the accomplishment of that goal, each type of division, Marine and Army airborne, has developed and tailored an organization peculiar to and in support of its particular mission.

A Marine Corps division's primary mission is:

. . . to execute amphibious operations and such other operations as may be directed, supported by Marine aviation, force troops and force service support units. The concept of employment sees the Marine division . . . as an integral part of a Marine Amphibious Force in amphibious operations and in land operations ashore under conditions of limited general warfare.¹³

That primary mission focuses almost exclusively on amphibious operations. In comparison to the Marine division is the Army airborne division. The mission of an airborne division is:

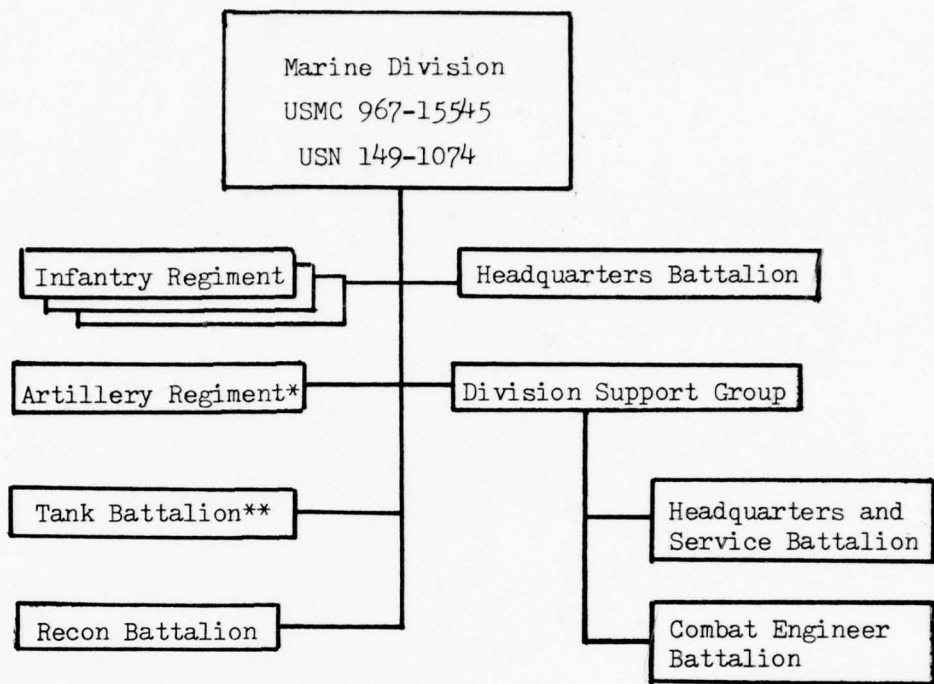
. . . movement by air and by airborne assault to seize and hold assigned objectives, to close with the enemy and destroy or capture him in a low-intensity or mid-intensity conflict until ground link-up can be accomplished or until reinforced by air or surface landing. . . . Movement by air and airborne assault when reinforced, to seize and hold assigned objectives in high-intensity operational environments . . . Movement by air on short notice to any overseas land areas as a deterrent or resistance force in any threatened area.¹⁴

To further the comparison of the two types of divisions with their unique missions is an examination and brief explanation of each division's structure and major weapons.

FORCE STRUCTURE AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

The Marine Corps division is organized with three infantry regiments, an artillery regiment, a tank battalion, a reconnaissance battalion, a headquarters battalion and a division support group. Within each infantry regiment are three infantry battalions. The artillery regiment has three battalions of four batteries each. The tank battalion has three or four tank companies and a TOW anti-armor company.

Headquarters Battalion has a Service Company, Communication Company, Military Police Company and the Division Headquarters. And the Division Support Group has a Combat Engineer Battalion, the nucleus of the Landing Force Shore Party and Truck Company with the capability of lifting elements of two infantry battalions.¹⁵ The Marine division is illustrated in Figure 3-1 following:



* 3 Battalions of 4 Batteries each.

** 3 or 4 Tank companies and one anti-armor company.

Figure 3-1. Marine Division¹⁶

The division is normally employed as part of a Marine air-ground task force. That force is:

. . . a task organization tailored to accomplish the specific missions assigned. This task organization is designed to exploit the combat power inherent in closely integrated air and ground operations. The composition of Marine air-ground task forces may vary considerably, but will normally include the following major components:

- (1) A Command Element
- (2) A Ground Combat Element
- (3) An Aviation Combat Element

(4) A Combat Service Support Element (including Navy Support Elements.¹⁷

The Marine air-ground task force can be basically three different sizes, with the division supplying all or a portion of the ground combat element for each one. The smallest, the Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU), has a reinforced battalion as its ground combat element. A reinforced regiment is the ground combat element of the Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB), with the entire division as that element of the Marine Amphibious Force (MAF). The aviation combat unit is provided by the Marine airwing. Combat service support comes from the division, the airwing, Force Service Support Group and Navy support groups.¹⁸

The entire Marine division as the ground element of a MAF has the responsibility for conducting amphibious and land operations ashore under conditions of limited or general war.¹⁹ The capabilities and limitations of a Marine division are not spelled out specifically in any doctrine. Historical examples taken from World War II, the Korean conflict of the early 1950's and most recently Vietnam, however, illustrate both their capacities and limitations.

A Marine division, generally in concert with a Marine airwing and augmented combat service support, can be deployed to establish advanced naval and air bases as was done at Guam, Okinawa and ChuLai in Vietnam. The division or elements thereof can be employed to reinforce or protect installations such as the airfield at DaNang in 1965. The division can also reinforce and conduct a show of force either while afloat or ashore. Another capability includes normal ground combat operations suitable for light infantry. The Marine division is also capable of deployment on relatively short notice with all of its equipment in almost all kinds of weather and climate.

Their limitations are particularly noticeable in the realm of amphibious operations where transportation is dependent upon the United States Navy. Protracted land warfare requires that the Marine division be logistically supported from other sources in addition to their own logistics system as was evidence in Vietnam.

By taking the Marine division, comparing and contrasting it with the Army's airborne division, similarities and differences become apparent. The Army airborne division is organized as illustrated in Figure 3-2.

The airborne division is formed as it is to carry out those functions stated earlier in this chapter. (The division is organized one of two ways depending upon the modified table of organization and equipment.) The only significant difference in the two organizations is the addition or deletion of three anti-armor companies armed with the TOW anti-armor missile.²¹

The airborne division has a headquarters and headquarters company, an aviation battalion, an engineer battalion, division artillery, nine infantry battalions, a support command, a signal battalion, an air cavalry squadron, three brigade headquarters and headquarters companies, a military police company, a light armor battalion, an air defense battalion, a combat intelligence company and depending upon the mission, three anti-armor companies.²²

With this organization, the airborne division is capable of conducting the following types of missions:

Strategic deployment to:

- secure critical installations or facilities,
- reinforce U.S. and allied forces,

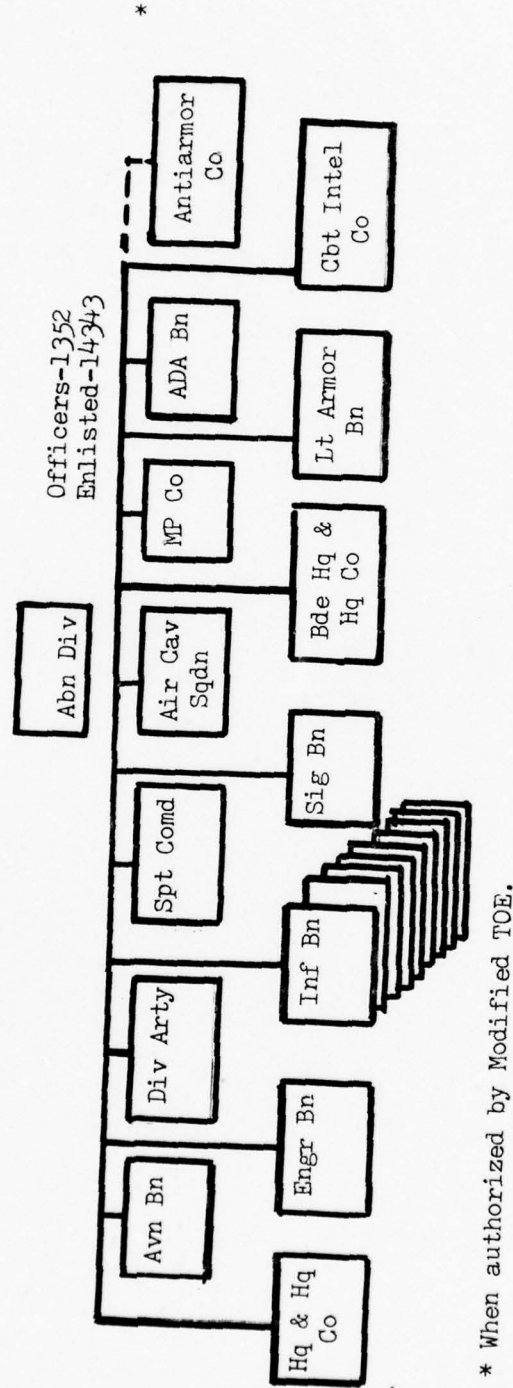


Figure 3-2. Airborne Division.

- conduct a show of force.

Airborne operations in the enemy's rear (i.e., block, interdict, and secure).

Airmobile and sustained ground operations when augmented.

Airborne raids.

Operations in a built-up area.²³

It is important to keep in mind both the capabilities and limitations of the airborne force. An airborne division is capable of: strategic deployment on short notice as a deterrent or as a strike force, conducting airborne assaults (parachute or airlanded), achieving tactical surprise because of its claimed all-weather capability, conducting sustained ground combat operations when augmented with ground mobility, fire support, and combat service support assets.²⁴

The limitations of the airborne division include: dependency on availability of Air Force support for airlift, fire support and resupply, and limited tactical mobility because once the unit is on the ground it is primarily foot-bound infantry. Others include limited armor protection, light field artillery, limited air defense and limited protection against nuclear, biological, chemical (NBC) and conventional fires.²⁵

A final method of comparing and contrasting the two divisions is by examining their major weapons. Table 3-1 below, lists and compares only those weapons integral to each division. Based on the missions assigned to either division, other weapons systems could be assigned to augment, such as amphibious tractor units to the Marines and M-60 tank units to the airborne division. Again, as with the missions, the weapons of each division are often unique and their use is to enhance the

accomplishment of specific tasks. For example: the M551 Sheridan armored reconnaissance vehicle was adopted by the airborne divisions because it is both air-transportable and air-droppable. The Marine Corps uses the 155mm Howitzer (towed) because it can be landed over the beach in current landing craft of the Navy or lifted ashore by CH-53 helicopter of the Marine airwing.

Table 3-1

Weapons Systems Integral to Airborne and Marine Divisions

Weapons System	Airborne ²⁶	Marine ²⁷
81mm mortar	36	72
4.2 inch mortar	30	0
105mm Howitzer (towed)	54	54
155mm Howitzer (towed)	0	18
Vulcan 20mm Air Defense Gun	48	0
M551 Sheridan (armored reconnaissance airborne assault vehicle)	54	0
M-60 tank	0	70
Attack helicopter (AH-1Q)	33	0
TOW (ATGM)	168	72
Dragon (ATGM)	258	0*
106 mm Recoilless rifle	0	72*

*The Marine Corps is currently replacing the 106mm recoilless rifle with the Dragon (ATGM) but at this writing the conversion is not yet complete.

The majority of this chapter has been primarily concerned with just United States capabilities in amphibious and airborne operations. Without some investigation of "other" forces, those comparisons and argument for or against the proposal are not totally relevant. One of the overriding reasons for an armed force of current size in the United States stems from the threat of the Warsaw Pact. Therefore, the following section examines Warsaw Pact amphibious and airborne capabilities.

WARSAW PACT AMPHIBIOUS AND AIRBORNE FORCES

In order to see the current United States amphibious and airborne capabilities in a meaningful perspective, the inspection of United States' possible adversaries presents useful comparison for size and mission. The Soviet Union has an airborne force of seven divisions and a Naval Infantry or Marine Corps of approximately 17,000 men. In the Soviet navy there are 100 amphibious ships of various sizes.²⁸ Poland also has Marines, one amphibious assault division in their Army and one airborne division. Further, the Polish navy had twenty-three amphibious ships.²⁹ Amphibious shipping and landing craft are also in the navies of Bulgaria and East Germany. In addition, there are airborne units in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Romania.³⁰

The Warsaw Pact mission for their airborne forces envisions this force striking a decisive blow to the enemy deep in his rear areas in conjunction with a combined arms armies assault from the front.³¹ The following missions seem to support the concept of airborne force employment:

1. Support the efforts of the front line troops to encircle and destroy the enemy by conducting airborne assaults to the enemy flanks and rear.

2. Establish bridgeheads or river barriers to insure forces moving from the front will not lose attack momentum.
3. Seize airfields to support airland operations.
4. Follow-up and exploit nuclear attacks.
5. Assist advancing front forces in the pursuit. A comparison with the United States described earlier finds a similarity in both countries' airborne missions.³²

The mission assigned to Warsaw Pact amphibious forces appears to be similar to that of the U.S. Marine Corps.³³ However, whether those operations are to be limited to contiguous waters or become part of Soviet sea power projection, has yet to be established.³⁴ There is growing evidence that the Soviet Marine Corps may be deployed to other countries. This contention is supported by the sighting of Soviet amphibious forces off the coast of Angola in 1975.³⁵ The size of the Soviet Marine Corps is small in comparison to the U.S. Marine Corps. However, the U.S. Marine Corps was only 17,000 strong in 1937, smaller than the New York City police department, and expanded to over 500,000 by 1945.³⁶ The Soviet Union's naval infantry at the end of World War II had a strength of 368,000.³⁷ Given a specific mission, there is no reason a similar size Soviet Marine force could not again be mobilized.

The reason for the foregoing examination is to point out that the Warsaw Pact, particularly the Soviet Union, is not decreasing or combining, but is in fact maintaining or increasing both their amphibious and airborne capability. They are two distinct forces with different missions that apparently play an important part in the overall military strategy of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact.

This chapter has provided a comparison of the Marine and Army division indicating a tailoring of forces for specific tasks. The Marine division is purposely structured to be the ground combat element of an air-ground team with a mission of amphibious operations as the ultimate goal and reason for being.

The same inference can be drawn for the Army airborne division. That organization, created and improved over the last forty years has the ultimate goal of a force in readiness to be delivered by parachute to the battlefield for combat.

And finally, a look at our capability in both amphibious and airborne operations as compared to the Warsaw Pact points up two clear facts. The Warsaw Pact is expanding their capability in both arenas while the United States has been decreasing its forces for both amphibious and airborne operations.

With a background of history, missions and force structures, it is now vital to examine the probable and actual costs involved in the authors proposal.

END NOTES

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⁹Ibid., p. 23.

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¹¹Ibid., p. 14.

¹²Ibid., pp. 20, 22.

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¹⁵FMF 1977, op. cit., pp. 14-26.

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¹⁷Department of Defense, The United States Marine Corps, "The Organization of the Air-Ground Task Force," Marine Corps Order 3120-3A, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Marine Corps, 1970), pp. 1, 2.

¹⁸FMF 1977, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁹UNAAF, op. cit., p. 18.

²⁰TOE Airborne Division, op. cit., p. I-03.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

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²⁴Ibid., p. 6-5.

²⁵Ibid., p. 6-7.

²⁶TOE Airborne, op. cit., pp. 13-26.

²⁷FMF 77, op. cit., pp. III-01 - III-22.

²⁸"Countries and Principal Pacts," The Military Balance 1975-1976, September 1975, pp. 8-9.

²⁹Ibid., p. 13.

³⁰Ibid., p. 14.

³¹F. E. Van Horn, "A Survey of Soviet Airborne History and Missions," (unpublished MMAS thesis, Army Command and General Staff College, 1974), p. 87.

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³³J. J. Carroll, Soviet Naval Infantry, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Army Command and General Staff College), p. 75.

³⁴C. G. Pritchard, "Soviet Marines," To Use the Sea, (Annapolis, Maryland: United States Naval Institute Press, 1975), p. 263.

³⁵W. H. Park, "Foreign Policy and the Marine Corps," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 102, p. 18.

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CHAPTER IV

COST OF THE PROPOSED CONVERSION

INTRODUCTION

In their book, Where Does the Marine Corps Go from Here?, Binkin and Record discuss the budgetary consequences of the conversion of a Marine Corps division trained and equipped for an amphibious mission to a Marine airborne division taking the place of the Army airborne division. The authors claim that further savings would be realized from the deactivation of a second Marine Corps amphibious force (MAF), with its ground and air assets and support troops from the combat service support units.¹ The points that the authors make are primarily those of quantitative costs which can be mathematically produced to show a perceived overall saving. They see in their proposal for the conversion an annual savings of 430 million dollars by deactivating a Marine Corps division and air wing and associated support troops and another 520 million dollars by deactivating the Army airborne division with its supporting elements. The authors list a one-time cost of 40 million dollars for deactivation of the single Marine division and 50 million dollars for the deactivation of the Army airborne division.² They have arrived at their figures by using data from the Army Force Planning Handbook, 1975 edition, produced by the Comptroller of the Army and from their own estimates.

Binkin and Record have justified their proposed conversion and its concomitant force reductions as one facet of an overall savings in

quantitative costs. The subject should not be dismissed without further investigation if their proposal is to be seriously considered. In addition to costs of conversion and reduction of force levels under quantitative costs there are questions raised and an examination required of qualitative costs which will not have specific dollar values attached, but are nonetheless critical to the question of the conversion in this study.

To discern between the two costs, the terms quantitative and qualitative should be defined and are as such: quantitative (quantity) meaning amount or number and qualitative (quality) meaning peculiar and essential character, or a degree of excellence.³ The concern should be not only for the monetary or quantitative cost but also for the effect on the essential character, degree of excellence or qualitative cost of the conversion.

The quantitative costs presented in the proposal include expenditures for the deactivation of the two divisions and annual savings as a result of the deactivation. However the proposed costs of the entire conversion are not covered in the authors book. As a point of departure, the costs that they discussed will be presented along with other potential costs that might logically be expected in such a conversion. That discussion will be followed by an examination of potential qualitative costs and their bearing on the proposed conversion. The final portion will draw conclusions from the first two sections of the chapter.

POTENTIAL QUANTITATIVE COSTS

In addition to the cost outlined by the authors in the form of expenditures for the deactivation of both types of divisions there are

several other costs that they did not examine. To properly evaluate their alternative of the conversion and put it in perspective, those kinds of costs are considered in this chapter. Actual dollar costs on many of the items to be discussed are not included because of their complexity and ramifications outside of the scope of this paper. However, they are included to alert other serious researchers of this proposal to further areas of consideration that must be answered prior to a rational recommendation for or against the authors' proposal. An example of such a consideration would involve possible transfer of bases between the Marine Corps and the Army, or the political-economic ramifications of a base deactivation and closure. The unanswered questions are many and can start with the vital issue of training.

The basic training for an airborne soldier or a Marine assigned to one of the Marine Corps airborne billets consists of going through the Army Jump School at Fort Benning, Georgia. The cost of training an individual as a basic parachutist is currently \$2250 of which \$447 of that is basic pay and allowances.⁴ In determining the cost of the conversion, this is a basic consideration. Although Binkin and Record suggest that "... members of the 82nd would be granted the option of joining the new division . . .", a good number of billets would necessarily be filled by currently non-airborne qualified Marines.⁵ Consequently, the costs of training airborne qualified Marines, not only for the initial division but for replacement and follow-on officers and men becomes a major consideration.

Since the Airborne Jump School is currently at the Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, the question arises of who will run the school during and after the conversion.⁶ The Marine Corps does not have a cadre

of individuals who can properly run a jump school. A training cadre would have to come from the Army, but that source could likely dry-up unless all qualified jump instructors are transferred to the Marine Corps from the Army. Will all individuals so qualified be transferred despite their own personal preferences?

Training of the individual also consists of the training of pathfinders who are inserted into the drop zone before the main body arrives, for guidance and control. That additional item of training cost averages out at \$4049 an individual including their pay and allowances.⁷ The same considerations can be made for jump masters and parachute riggers. Both billets are vital to an airborne unit's ability to perform its mission and the costs for individuals trained as such must be taken into account.

In addition, costs that must also be explored are those for training of units. These units run the gamut from fireteams and squads up to and including the division. In many cases the training on the ground will be similar to that of the same sized Marine Corps units. However, the new dimension of airborne insert onto the battlefield must be included, again adding additional costs to that unit training. Also included would be the costs of the training evaluations, including the qualified people and their equipment that would be needed for that evaluation. Since these costs are unique, they have not been generated, but would have to be in order to make the actual conversion costs and savings meaningful.

An additional question in this area arises. It is the question of whether there would be cross training of Marines assigned to amphibious divisions with those Marines assigned to the airborne division? Currently the individual Marine, officer and enlisted, can be and is transferred between divisions with relative ease because each division has basically

the same type of mission and force structure. Concerning the possible introduction of an airborne division into the Marine Corps with its unique force structure, and mission would it be cost effective to have Marines trained to fulfill duties in either type of unit? If cross-training is envisioned, then the Marine Corps would have a greater amount of costs to prepare the required number of Marines for airborne as well as amphibious operations. This would be necessary in order to be able to rotate Marines out of the airborne division and into other assignments such as schools, high level staffs, joint tours, and independent duty. If, however, that type of cost is too prohibitive, then there could possibly be created a third type of Marine Corps combat unit, airborne with the other two current types, amphibious and aviation. To suggest that this is necessarily bad or a distinct disadvantage is incorrect. But the idea certainly enters into the constraints placed on budgeting for force structures, especially for manpower resources.

When training facets are explored, it is difficult to envision total costs in that area without also including an examination of equipment for the proposed airborne Marine division. This poses several questions that are not fully covered by the authors in their proposal. Assuming that many of the airborne peculiar items such as parachutes, would be transferred to the Marine Corps, there is no other equipment to be considered. The authors suggest that the current airborne armor battalion with its M-551 Sheridan, armed reconnaissance airborne assault vehicle be transferred to the new Marine Corps airborne division. This is a vehicle rumored to be soon taken out of the inventory by the active Army and possibly transferred to the National Guard. But even if that does not take place, it is a unique vehicle with no current support base

in the Marine Corps in the form of maintenance, spare parts, or trained operators and mechanics. This support base could be built with time, but is it worth the effort to adopt such a singular type vehicle? Crew training on the Sheridan is a related concern of equal magnitude. Would the effort required to train Marine crews again be worth the time and money? To derive a perceived savings from just the transfer of the vehicle itself is misleading and cannot be seriously considered without including the factors mentioned above.

The study further suggests that the current air cavalry squadron of the airborne division be transferred to the Marine Corps.⁸ The three particular models of helicopters found in that squadron, the attack AH-1G, the observation OH-58A and the utility UH-1H, are not in the Marine Corps inventory. As with the M-551 Sheridan, there is minimal base for their maintenance and spare parts. Further, Marine pilots filling slots in that air cavalry squadron would require either additional training in the tactics required for those billets or the tactics would have to be changed. If the aircraft are in fact those transferred from the Army, not only is there a problem with compatibility between the aircraft types, but current Marine Corps helicopters have some distinct differences from similar Army aviation assets. Marine Corps helicopters, such as the UH-1N, have two engines instead of the one used by the Army aircraft, and are constructed that way to be able to fly on just one engine as an over-the-water precaution. As such, transferred Army helicopters probably would not be used for amphibious operations, thus decreasing the overall capability of Marine Corps aviation assets. Would it be worth the price, either to adopt Army assets just to support airborne operations or to re-equip all units with Marine Corps helicopters able to perform both types of operations?

And finally the question of communications. Much of the radio equipment in the Marine Corps has been developed to support amphibious operations. A result is that Marine Corps radios have a certain degree of compatibility with the Army radios, but nonetheless, they are of a different family. This also holds true for some of the multi-channel radio equipment and ground surveillance radar. Even if the radios are capable of netting together, the question of the differences in maintenance and repair must be answered.

In addition to the preceding discussion, another area of cost to be explored concerns the disposal of excess equipment that would probably result from the transfer. Title 10 of the United States Code is specific on the requirements for disposing of excess equipment.⁹ There undoubtedly would be equipment items for both types of divisions that would be considered excess once such a conversion and deactivation took place. How much property would fall into the category of excess would depend upon certain factors. Is the equipment compatible between services or not? If not, then that equipment could be declared excess. Again, using the M-551 Sheridan as an example, it could possibly fall into that category if it was determined that the cost of procurement, training of crews and mechanics, and maintenance was too high. Marine Corps peculiar items such as amphibious vehicles could also fall into the excess equipment category. Although amphibious vehicles are not necessarily organizational property of all Marine divisions, they are part of combat support units and are designated for the support of the division in an amphibious operation. That slice of amphibious vehicles devoted to a deactivated or converted Marine division would have to be dealt with and would likely fall into the category of excess military property.¹⁰ The same considerations are

true for artillery, the type currently in the inventory being unique to each organization. The Marine Corps artillery support for a division is based upon a weapon different from that supporting an Army airborne division.¹¹ The 105mm howitzer in the airborne division is peculiar to the Army and not found in the Marine Corps.¹² The authors do not discuss what is to be done with the excess equipment in this area, but as with earlier discussed items, it is a cost that must be considered when evaluating the proposal. The exact methods of disposal for such excess equipment are beyond the scope of this study, but they too would have to be taken into consideration. Closely related to disposal of excess equipment but of a more potential politically-sensitive economic situation involves transfer and/or deactivation of bases and relocation of major units for both the Army and the Marine Corps.

Again, returning to the subject of Fort Benning, it would be important to consider the actual future location of jump training. Would it be cost effective to leave it at its present site, or should it be relocated, either at Fort Bragg or at some Marine Corps installation.¹³ Costs of retaining it under Marine Corps control at Fort Benning, maintaining it under Army control at its present location or moving the entire school and its equipment to a new site are all relevant but unexplored by the authors.

The proposal also discussed the transfer of Fort Bragg from the Army to the Marine Corps, and the question of Fort Benning and the Jump School located there has already been covered.¹⁴ However, more important and apparently ignored is the question of the bases on the Pacific rim and those forces currently occupying those bases. The authors proposal has coupled to the conversion of one Marine division to a Marine airborne

division, the deactivation of a third Marine Corps division. With the transfer of the Marine airborne division to Fort Bragg, that would leave the future of the bases currently containing the two Marine Corps divisions in question. The potential ramifications of the closure of two and possibly more large Marine Corps bases would be a most important and potentially volatile subject to deal with. If, as the authors suggest, the 3rd Marine Division and the III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF) were to be disbanded and the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California, were transferred to Fort Bragg, that would leave the current Marine bases in California, Hawaii and Okinawa whose disposal must be dealt with.¹⁵ With the current economic climate, the impact of base closures is a complex and emotional problem. But of more consequence is the strength of U.S. forces in the Pacific would be reduced to one Army division in Hawaii. Our military posture in that part of the world would be less than it was prior to World War II. What would be the effect of such a drastic reduction in forces in the Pacific, not only on our allies, but on countries such as the Soviet Union, Peoples Republic of China and North Korea? Would that proposed posture in the Pacific encourage adventurism on the part of our enemies and realignment of position by our allies? Can the United States afford to focus our combat strength and power toward Europe at the expense of our commitments in the Pacific? The possible outcome of such a realignment of our forces merits careful consideration at the highest levels of the U.S. government. The questions raised remain to be examined and answered before this proposal is ever enacted.

A final quantitative cost that is of vital importance deals with Marine Corps aviation and its role in the support of the proposed Marine

airborne division. It is clear that the Air Force would have a significant role to fulfill with the proposed airborne division, similar to that they currently have with the Army airborne division. The Air Force is the only armed service in the United States with the assets to air-drop a division of airborne troops. However, there needs to be a further examination of the inter-operability between Marine air and Air Force air operations in the proposed new organization. In the proposal, the authors do away with twelve squadrons of fixed-wing aircraft from the Marine airwing in III MAF and retain only the helicopters. Further they suggest that all tactical fighter support would then come from the Navy and Air Force for the airborne operations.¹⁶ This raises several questions.

Possible transfer of Marine aviation has been discussed earlier, primarily concerning helicopters. Another question is based upon the Marine Corps current concept of fixed wing air-ground support. Under the authors proposal, it appears that the Marine Corps division would still rely upon Navy and Marine Corps air for close air support in amphibious operations. However, close air support for the Marine airborne division poses a problem. The Air Force with its unique assets and doctrine currently supplies not only air transportation for airborne operations by the Army, it also supplies the majority of the close air support for these operations. Would their system also be used for the close air support of a Marine airborne operation? Only the Air Force has the aircraft to airtransport paratroopers as was discussed before, and this support would undoubtedly have to remain the same. However, what sort of command and control for close air support would have to be created for a Marine airborne operation? A specific problem in this

area to be solved would be inter-operability by Marine units with different support systems, Marine Corps and Air Force. For example, what type of training for tactical air control parties and the control of air space and other aviation missions where a Marine amphibious operation is being conducted in conjunction with a Marine airborne operation; Marine Corps or Air Force?

There is also a problem of duplication of missions that must be taken into consideration. If Marine air were to take a greater role in supporting an airborne operation, additional training and equipment costs must be considered. Although the idea of Marine owned transportation is not a serious consideration, the interface of the Marine Corps, Air Force and the Navy, must be included in any such proposal.

Quantitative costs for the proposed conversion are myriad and multi-faceted. To state that the conversion of a Marine division to an airborne division will save money, based on anything less than all cost aspects gives a false picture. And even though Binkin and Record discussed some quantitative costs, many were left unexposed to the reader.

POTENTIAL QUALITATIVE COSTS

In addition to quantitative costs, the aspect of qualitative costs were not examine by the authors and those costs must also be a part of a conversion study package.

One of the more essential of these qualitative costs for such a conversion is that of institutional memory, first mentioned in Chapter II of this study. Quite simply, this term means, what the background and experience, or "memory," of an organization is with regards to accomplishing a particular mission or task. This is a critical concern in both

amphibious and airborne operations. Each of those forms of warfare is singular, requiring special equipment and special training for its successful prosecution on the battlefield. Institutional memory in both of these combat specialties finds not only special equipment and training, but also a body of men, officers and enlisted, who have served in all billets, are experienced with all facets, and are steeped in that unique doctrine.

In the Marine Corps there exists the amphibious expertise for the United States armed forces. It is there by tradition, by design, and reinforced by a well-developed if somewhat narrow institutional memory. Within the same Marine Corps there is no institutional memory of airborne operations. There is basic knowledge and understanding of the concepts, but other than a handful of specialized parachutists trained for special small unit missions, there is no expertise in the airborne.

That expertise does exist in the United States Army airborne. Within that organization resides a body of men with a working knowledge of airborne techniques evolved from first fledgling efforts by the United States Army back in the early days of World War II.

Taking this concept of institutional memory and applying it as an independent variable to Binkin and Record's proposed conversion, produces some penetrating questions. The authors' solution suggested current members of the Airborne Division be allowed to join the new Marine airborne division.¹⁷ But is this a suitable solution? Does their solution fully transfer that institutional memory from the Army airborne to the proposed Marine airborne? At this point it is not possible to say, but there are some objections to keep in mind.

Of those Army Airborne qualified personnel transferring to the proposed Marine Airborne division, how many would be senior officers and non-commissioned officers who would be in possession of the institutional memory? Records, "lessons learned," unit histories and the like could be transferred with ease but the quantity and quality of those volunteers transferring from Army to Marine Corps seems in question. For senior officers and NCO's, questions of rank and promotion may be of great concern. It could affect the amount and quality of the attempted transfer of institutional memory.

In addition to the above question, a final one remains unexplored, a corollary to institutional memory. If the new Marine airborne division is made up of part former Army airborne trained troops and former Marine amphibious trained troops, might there not be a marked difference in the airborne knowledge level among all ranks? To illustrate: a Captain, former Army airborne Company Commander compared in knowledge with a Marine Lieutenant Colonel Battalion Commander who may be jump qualified but with no practical knowledge or background in airborne doctrine. These are important questions because they can affect overall morale and effectiveness of a unit.

Institutional memory is further related to tradition as yet another qualitative cost. Tradition in each organization is a strong factor that impacts on both morale and overall attitude toward its self and its mission. Although tradition by itself may hardly be the determination point for the decision on a conversion, it is certainly a factor that should be considered along with other qualitative factors. Throughout history, units rich in tradition such as the French Foreign Legion, the British Royal Marines and Ghengis Khan's Mongol hordes have

been notably successful in their assigned mission.¹⁸ Tradition then is also a factor to be concerned with in the proposal. It is impossible to place a dollar value on it.

Although tradition is not a tangible cost when considering qualitative costs, there are tangible considerations when other factors of qualitative costs are included. One such factor is the question of the "flavor" or the character that the proposed Marine airborne division shall assume. Will that character continue to be one of Naval "flavor" enhanced by Naval type missions of the Marine Corps such as ". . . seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign."?¹⁹ Or will the character necessarily remain Army in flavor and Marine in name only? While the next chapter of this paper discusses potential changes to missions and law, this consideration is also properly presented for discussion under qualitative costs. Since the Marine airborne division would still be under the Naval Service of which the Marine Corps is a part, it would become an important question in the proposed conversion.

A final and paramount question arises as to the qualitative cost effects of a reduction in the size of the United States amphibious capability by two-thirds. Binkin and Record claim a reduction for the future use of amphibious operations and yet as Heinl in his book, Soldiers of the Sea, states:

A history of warfare shows that the basic strategy of sea-based people is amphibious warfare. An amphibious force can produce an anxiety in an enemy and even more important cause him to hold forces in readiness to meet such a potential forces that may otherwise be used against land armies.²⁰

The Soviets today plan for and hold exercises in the defense against amphibious landings. "Soviet planners are concerned primarily with the amphibious threat represented by U.S. Marines and British Royal Marines."²¹ Is it qualitatively cost effective to reduce that threat to the Soviets and thus allow them to release forces for deployment elsewhere in Europe, possibly on the West German border? As Moulton stated in his article, "The Marines as an Instrument of Power,":

. . . there is a need by NATO for the amphibious capability by the Marine Corps as a military presence and perhaps more important as exemplification of seaforce potentiality that remains and increases in urgency each year.²²

President Carter recently said, "We face a challenge and will do whatever is necessary to meet it." He made that statement in reference to recent Soviet military buildup.²³ The proposal to reduce our amphibious forces by two-thirds and transfer U.S. airborne capability from the Army to the Marine Corps does not support that guidance. Can we meet the Soviet challenge by reducing capabilities and limiting our methods of response to such a challenge?

These foregoing qualitative cost factors are presented as a background. These considerations must be included in any rational alternative proposal to the current force structure of amphibious and airborne organizations in the United States armed services today.

Binkin and Record have categorically stated that their proposed alternatives to the present organization of the Marine Corps and Army Airborne forces are just that, alternatives, and not recommendations.²⁴ But because the reader is given a choice of alternatives, then the questions raised on quantitative and qualitative costs must be answered, the entire issue must be presented. As important as quantitative cost effectiveness is today, no less important and in many ways more important

are the qualitative costs of institutional memory, tradition, the potential danger of a reduced amphibious force and a concomitant reduced ability to meet aggression from the Soviet Union. The proposal of converting an amphibious division to an airborne division and the deactivating of an airborne and amphibious division is one that should be viewed and analyzed with all possible caution applying to it the questions, factors, and variables found in this chapter and the following chapter.

END NOTES

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⁴Statement by Martin R. Pettersen, Lieutenant, USA, Budget Officer of the Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, 21 March 1978.

⁵Binkin and Record, op. cit., p. 79.

⁶Pettersen Statement, loc. cit.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Binkin and Record, op. cit., p. 81.

⁹U.S. Code Annotated, Title 10, Armed Forces, Sections 951 to 3000, (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co.), pp. 459-464.

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¹¹Ibid., p. 19.

¹²U.S. Department of Defense, The United States Army, TOE 57H Airborne Division w/Ch. 1, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1976), p. 111-04.

¹³Binkin and Record, op. cit., p. 79.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁸E. R. Dupuy and T. N. Dupuy, "The Mongol Military System," The Encyclopedia of Military History, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970), p. 341.

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CHAPTER V

CHANGES NECESSITATED BY THE PROPOSED CONVERSION

INTRODUCTION

Although the proposal briefly discussed some structural and fiscal changes in conjunction with the conversion alternative, many areas that would possibly be affected by the change were left unexplored. This chapter deals with those areas that would necessitate change if the proposal were adopted.

MISSIONS, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE CHANGED IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED

Because the Marine Corps takes its mission and basic structure from the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, (Public Law 416), that particular piece of legislation would have to be revised or amended again. The current law would have to either be modified to show the new mission and structure of the Marine Corps, or eliminated altogether. An argument for the latter solution is based on the fact that none of the other services have missions and/or force structure delineated in the amended 1947 National Security Act as does the Marine Corps. Is there a current need, therefore, to have this specific mission and structure in a public law?

Another area of exploration would be the Commandant of the Marine Corps' role in the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He currently sits on that staff

as a co-equal in matters concerning the Marine Corps.¹ Even though in reality he sits on the majority of issues facing the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that official status may have to be changed. The Marine Corps under the Binkin and Record proposal, while having the scope of its missions expanded, would in fact be diminished in size with the elimination of one full division, part of an airwing and support troops. What then would the Commandant's role be? His status could remain the same, he could be elevated to full equal membership (thus possibly eligible to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), or he could be relegated to a position subordinate to the Chief of Naval Operations as he was prior to World War II.

Because the airborne mission of the Army is not specifically covered in this act, modification of the law for that service is not necessary. The same consideration holds true for Title 10 of the United States Code. Those sections dealing with the Army would remain unchanged with extensive modifications required for those sections dealing with the Marine Corps. The modifications for Title 10 of the United States Code would be similar to those of Public Law 416 and similar considerations are raised. The reason is that Title 10 is based upon Public Law 416 and thus changes to the latter will undoubtedly result in changes to the former.

Other necessary modifications would be those to the Department of Defense Directive 5100.1, "Functions Papers". That section of the "Functions Papers" that deals with Primary Functions of the Army would have to be altered in relation to the Army's current responsibility in the area of airborne.² And that airborne mission either in its present form or modified would then have to come under the primary functions of the Navy and Marine Corps.

As with the "Functions Papers," so the "UNAAF" would require modification and updating to reflect new missions, functions and responsibilities. In the case of the Marine Corps, the changes may also show a new force structure based on changes in Public Law 416 as previously discussed. In examining current Army Responsibilities for Airborne Operations that would probably be transferred to the Marine Corps, some potential problems come to the surface. These issues call for further investigation beyond the scope of this paper. Currently "UNAAF" states: "The Army shall have primary interest in the development of those airborne doctrines, procedures, and equipment which are of common interest to the Army and Marine Corps."³ If that function be transferred to the Marine Corps, an initial problem is encountered. Those funds currently going to the Army for such development would have to be necessarily diverted to the Marine Corps to foster an airborne capability.

In addition, the Marine Corps would most likely be required by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to accept primary responsibility for development of doctrine and procedure for joint operations involving airborne operation. That would include:

- (1) Development and preparation of doctrinal publications for the conduct of training.
- (2) Joint training, provision of training facilities, and determination and establishment of adequate procedures for the conduct of training.
- (3) Consultation and coordination with the other services in all matters of joint concern.⁴

Of those three responsibilities, the Marine Corps, with its current and foreseeable future capabilities with airborne operations of company sized and larger, could adequately perform only number three. There is no current capability, nor could one be created overnight to perform the first two.

A change in the amphibious mission and responsibilities would affect not only the Marine Corps, but also the Navy. With the reduced number of Marine Corps divisions for amphibious operations, the Navy would in fact possess excess amphibious shipping. The question rises again as to the Navy's responsibility, if any, for support of Marine airborne operations. This would become particularly important where a joint operation involving both amphibious and airborne forces is planned. These considerations would have to be developed in order to clarify command relationships in such an operation.

POSSIBLE FORCE STRUCTURE CHANGES IF THE PROPOSAL
WERE ADOPTED

While changes to the missions, functions, and responsibilities is a problem to be dealt with, an equally difficult issue is that of structural changes to the Army and particularly the Marine Corps. The most apparent and immediate change would be the total elimination of an airborne division from the Army. With the airborne mission to be assumed by the Marine Corps, another pertinent question is as to what structural form the proposed Marine airborne division would take. An obvious solution is for the Marine airborne division to assume the identical structure of the current Army airborne division. But even this relatively simple solution raises some serious questions over equipment compatibility.

The parachutes and related equipment as discussed before, pose no problem and could be easily transferred from Army to Marine Corps. However, the Marine airborne division would have to reflect an organization for maintenance and delivery of airborne related equipment. This

would require not just a new organization for the Marine Corps, but trained personnel to man it. Some qualified personnel to run such a unit would possibly transfer from the Army under the provision of the proposal. But it would require a concerted effort to establish an effective combat service support function in this area. It does not presently exist.

The potential problems faced with the transfer of the Sheridan, Army aviation and communications items have been discussed in detail. The need for further study in those areas has been made quite clear. A final area in combat service support also needs further consideration.

The purely administrative, logistical, and medical systems would also require major modification since those systems in the Army and Marine Corps are dissimilar. Since the problems of logistics have been covered earlier in this and other chapters, the medical system problem will be used as an illustration. Doctors, dentists, medical corpsmen and other medical support personnel are not an integral part of the Marine Corps. Those functional areas requiring medical personnel are in fact filled by the Navy. An airborne Marine Corps division poses a dilemma. Where do the medical and dental personnel come from? If they are transferred, they would in fact be transferred not to the Marine Corps but to the Navy. Would they then be eligible to serve subsequent tours at purely Navy installations or on ships? Currently, doctors, dentists and other medical support personnel in the Navy do in fact serve with both the Navy and the Marine Corps and there is little logic behind any change to that current and satisfactory arrangement. An alternative to that proposal would be to train Navy doctors, dentists and corpsmen for airborne operations. At present there are literally none of those personnel, save for a few

Navy corpsmen, jump qualified; there has been no requirement for such skills. These problems also must be solved before any such conversion could effectively take place.

This discussion of potential changes to missions and structures concludes the major portion of the examination of the proposal. The final chapter collates the discussion and presents final areas for future study.

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¹U.S. Department of Defense, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components," DOD Directive 5100.1 w/Ch. 4, (Washington, D.C.: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1977), p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 8.

³U.S. Department of Defense, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, Publication 2, Unified Action Armed Forces, (Washington, D.C.: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1974), p. 21.

⁴Ibid., p. 8.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The initial chapter of this study described the Binkin and Record proposal for conversion of a Marine division to an airborne division as well as the reduction of the nation's amphibious force by two-thirds. The body of the study examined the proposal for two essential reasons: would the proposal be cost effective, and of greater importance; what would the effect be of such a conversion on the United States capability to present an effective military posture?

In order to answer these questions, certain background information and data was presented to establish a basis for the decision. The historical development of the two types of divisions, Marine amphibious and Army airborne was given. This was followed by a comparison and a contrast of the current functions, responsibilities, missions and force structure of the two organizations. Costs of such a conversion were then presented to include not only quantitative costs, but also a vital area not covered by the authors, qualitative costs. As final background, probable changes that would occur if the proposal was adopted were discussed. These changes included those to the functions, the missions, the force structure and to the laws or directives governing the two divisions.

The Binkin and Record proposal is attractive at face value because it appears to offer substantial savings in both money and manpower without sacrificing the capability of the United States to meet threats to

either ourselves or to our allies. But the proposal is too shallow. It raises but leaves unanswered too many pertinent questions.

The changes to force structure create monetary problems unanswered by the proposal's discussion of quantitative costs. By the authors' own admission at least part of the figures for the quantitative costs, both expenses and savings, came from their own estimates and are thus unsubstantiated. Not included either in depth or at all in their discussion of costs were those that could be expected from: the transfer of bases and relocation of people; the disposal of equipment; and the procurement of heretofore unique Army vehicles and equipment by the Marine Corps. In addition, those myriad of training costs that could reasonably be expected as a result of such a conversion were also left unmentioned, unexplored. Can there possibly be as large a savings as the proposal contends without taking these additional and important quantitative cost variables into consideration?

Significant as the points are of quantitative costs, are the points of qualitative costs. In particular, that important and persuasive variable that was seemingly ignored by the authors; institutional memory. The portion of their alternative closest to recognizing the importance of that variable was with the proposed voluntary transfer of those Army personnel desiring to be in the new Marine airborne division.¹ Although institutional memory was borne out of the evolutionary development of each type of unit, it is a phenomenon whose effects are seen throughout the study.

An airborne Army division transferred to the Marine Corps, may bring with it at least a modicum of institutional memory. But even with this infusion, the expertise level for airborne in the Marine Corps has

been shown to be woefully inadequate to effectively carry out Binkin and Record's proposal. The complex missions and structures of the Marine Corps and Army airborne divisions have evolved their own separate ways to best accomplish their assigned tasks. To change from one specialty to another is not easy. As an analogy; providing a general practitioner with a set of surgical instruments and one or two trained assistants does not mean that he will instantly become a competent brain surgeon. He has some similar anatomical background as the actual brain surgeon, but much time, study and practice or training is needed before that general practitioner is capable of performing complicated brain surgery. So it is true with giving the Marine Corps the "instruments and some assistants trained in airborne operations." Much more is needed to reach a desired level of competency.

Again, under the question of qualitative costs and basic force structure discussed earlier: would a Marine airborne division be structured in such a way to include a collateral capability of amphibious assault? This would cause an examination of equipment and its capability and weight as well as the force structure. Can such a dual purpose division be created with an ability to effectively carry out both missions? As was pointed out, the Army originally thought in terms of an airborne division as a standard infantry division with parachute training added. This idea was terminated early in the development stages and never even tested because of the obvious complexity of airborne operations. There is little historical proof to show that the dual-purpose division, especially with such divergent missions as airborne and amphibious is an acceptable or effective unit. It all but precludes both types of specialized training for one unit with any hope of an effective fighting organization.

The entire area of probable changes to functions, missions, force structures and the problems inherent with these changes also raised far too many unanswered questions. And, if in fact these demonstrated weaknesses of the proposal are not enough to cause its outright rejection, there is one more reason that should cause at least further detailed investigation. That reason is perhaps the main one and has been steadily formed throughout the study. The question or concern does not seem to be a matter of conversion itself of a Marine division, but far more critical: can the United States afford to reduce the amphibious arm of its General Purpose forces by two-thirds? In addition, can the United States afford to take the airborne functions and missions from an organization highly evolved in that state of the art and assign it to the Marine Corps? Although the Marine Corps is battle-proven in land warfare such as Korea and Vietnam as well as amphibious operations, it currently has no capability for airborne operations above platoon level. These are the ultimate questions which must be answered before such a conversion takes place.

Of overriding concern, however, is the effect of the reduction in amphibious forces. The probable effect of the proposal on the current amphibious posture of the United States and a future ability to be used as a deterrent force against a threat to this nation or her allies. The authors maintain that the threat toward the United States does not require an amphibious force of the current size, strength, and capability.² They make that claim based upon two major assumptions: current military and technological constraints and domestic-political constraints as has been pointed out earlier in the study.³

The counterpoint to the proposal is that there is indeed a need for a strong amphibious force. Today as in the past there is a need during a war to threaten the enemy flanks with amphibious raids and assaults. A credible capability of forceable entry against unpredictable events such as the Cuban Missile Crises 1962, Dominican Republic 1965, and Cyprus 1974 is a deterrent whose existence may prevent opportunism. Although those ideas were originally applied to amphibious warfare alone, much of what was said can in fact be applied to the airborne force and its plan for contingency operations.

Of course a reduced amphibious force would not have the current problems of having inadequate amphibious shipping. However, this advantage is likened to paring a foot down to the size of the shoe for a proper fit rather than obtaining a larger shoe. The results from the paring down may make the current shoe fit, but at a degree of loss of effectiveness of the foot itself.

There are specific reasons for having an amphibious Marine Corps of its current size and expense in today's sophisticated warfare environment. Charles G. Pritchard, in his article on Soviet Marines asserts:

A sobering thought to consider is that at a period in history when the U.S.S.R. has embarked on a vast naval and maritime program of development, the United States is moving to curtail and limit its own amphibious force. History is unsparing in its treatment of the unprepared.⁴

There is emotion in those words, but Pritchard's writings are based upon fact and his warning bears recognition. A reduction in our current amphibious force would save some dollars perhaps, but at what ultimate cost?

Further, former Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert Cushman (Ret) saw the

Marines task is one of providing low key low profile forces which are capable of discouraging a growing number of could be challengers, but not so formidable that they provoke counter-productive fear, resentment and hostility. Properly balanced and properly deployed, such forces can provide an effective means--and at times the only means--of exerting influence on situations where our interests are involved.⁶⁵

Here is a view by a former Commandant that sees the Marines as a mobile deterrent force of moderate size. Marines as a reputable fighting force can adequately perform three basic roles:

- Amphibious units attached to Naval Task Forces demonstrate United States resolve and contribute to deterrence by their appearance.
- The amphibious force can react rapidly and assault land from the sea in situations that require it.
- In major conflicts, the Marine Corps can conduct division and larger sized landings and with added fight along side with Army units.⁶

Those missions can be expanded to potential use in NATO, especially around the littorals of the continent. We could assume that the Soviets and other countries can and will demonstrate or actually deploy troops in actions against United States interests.⁷ A recent example of this was the appearance of Soviet amphibious forces off Angola in 1975, reflecting that country's recognition of the importance of the "Naval presence mission," and in support thereof, the capability to project forces ashore.⁸ In similar cases national security policy makers will find United States amphibious forces of value in coping with the "crises."

Equally important is the perceived and probable effect on the airborne capability of the United States upon transfer of that mission from the Army to the Marine Corps. Again, as with costs there may be when all questions are answered, a dollar savings as was pointed out by the authors. But will that dollar saving be offset by the disadvantages previously dealt with such as lack of institutional memory, low levels of expertise, or a

perceived attack on traditions of the two services? An effective airborne force, capable of performing detailed and complicated tasks under the most rigorous of combat conditions is not created by the stroke of a pen or a new Public Law. A new force of airborne Marines could be created, but how long would it be until that unit was combat ready? Equally important, could the United States afford the period of time to effectively train such a force? We know of the Soviet approach and attitude toward the airborne. Even though Binkin and Record maintain large scale airborne operations ". . . have been almost uniformly unsuccessful against alert defenses . . ." ⁹ the Soviets have eight airborne divisions of which seven are combat ready. Each of the members of the Warsaw Pact has at least one airborne battalion. ¹⁰ The emphasis from the Warsaw Pact does not appear to be one of a reduction in capability or number, but at least a holding of status quo in the field of airborne forces. It would serve no purpose nor is it logical to say that we should do as the Soviets do in the field of airborne employment. Our concepts and doctrine obviously differ in as many aspects as they are similar to theirs. However, we must be aware of the reasoning behind their force structure in order to meet any situation that they may foster.

As Maurice Tugwell in writing on the reasons for an airborne capability today put it, there is a need for airborne forces to react to perceived threats, experts in counter-landings to eliminate hostile air-landings and as an option to use in the event of something less than nuclear warfare. ¹¹ The point that Tugwell makes about counter-landings puts some doubt as to the capability to carry that mission out by a newly formed, inexperienced Marine airborne division.

A further salient point that has been the subject of much discussion in and out of the press is our current expanding and future role in the

combat readiness area of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The United States has declared that it is committed to NATO. Again quoting Secretary of Defense Brown in an address to Congress in his Annual Defense budget report on 2 February 1978,

The United States will do its share to ensure that NATO has the capabilities--conventional as well as nuclear to maintain the independence and territorial integrity of Western Europe Our Policy is in complete agreement with current NATO guidance in its emphasis on a flexible response and on the need for conventional . . . forces in the posture of the Alliance. We also agree with our allies that owing to the strengthening of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe, NATO (including the United States) must make major improvements in the conventional capabilities of the Alliance.¹²

Those words run counter to any proposal for a reduction in force strength as suggested by the authors. Our current commitment to NATO is not one of lessening support but rather one of an increase in numbers, size and capability. In light of our own involvement with NATO, is it wise to lessen either amphibious capability in the NATO flanks or to deal with threats elsewhere in the world? Recently, Defense Secretary Brown said of the Marine Corps with its current amphibious capability that it was the principle means possessed by the United States for quickly responding to global trouble areas where light and moderate weight forces may be needed.¹³

The Binkin and Record proposal does not allow for a credible or effective amphibious force capability in the United States. It has left too many questions unanswered, too many areas that need further study. It has a face-value attractiveness of saving money with allegedly no loss in military strength and capability. But that attractiveness glosses over or leaves unanswered those pertinent questions brought forth in this study. Those questions must be studied and answered before such a proposal,

as the authors have advanced, is given serious thought or consideration.

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²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 30.

⁴Charles G. Pritchard, "Soviet Marines," To Use the Sea, Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1973), p. 266.

⁵Robert E. Cushman, "To the Limit of Our Vision and Back," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 1, (May, 1974), p. 121.

⁶Francis J. West, Jr., "Marines for the Future," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 104, (February, 1978), p. 40.

⁷Ibid., p. 41.

⁸W. Hays Parks, "Foreign Policy and the Marine Corps," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 102, (November, 1976), p. 18.

⁹Binkin and Record, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁰"Countries and Principal Pacts," The Military Balance 1977-1978, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1977), p. 8.

¹¹Maurice A. J. Tugwell, "Day of the Paratroopers," Military Review, LVII, (March, 1977), p. 53.

¹²"International Trends and Defense," Commanders Digest, 21, (February, 1978), p. 8.

¹³News, "Corps May be Force of the Future," Marine Corps Gazette, 62, (April, 1978), p. 2.

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